

A Legacy of Disaster Relief

In 1906, the year of the historic earthquake and fires that devastated San Francisco, Johnson & Johnson was 20 years old and had been working through the first decade of the new century to expand its product line. At the time, the Company was producing a wide range of products for medical professionals and consumer products sold in pharmacies.

At 5:13 a.m. on April 18, 1906, a major earthquake measuring 8.3 on the Richter scale devastated San Francisco, leveling large portions of the downtown, killing more than 3,000 people, destroying homes and businesses, and rupturing gas lines, causing massive fires that burned for days. Thousands of people were left homeless, and many needed medical attention that the overwhelmed city struggled to provide.

San Francisco was a community in which dozens of Johnson & Johnson associates lived and worked. By 10a.m. on that fateful day, the Company's warehouse, offices and supplies were destroyed. Employees requested and were granted telegraph access by the Red Cross to send an urgent plea for help to the Johnson & Johnson office in New Brunswick, N.J.

Within hours, emergency medical and surgical supplies were loaded on trains bound for San Francisco. Johnson & Johnson provided gauze, sutures, bandages, and other necessities, making the Company the largest donor of medical provisions to the area. Additionally, Johnson & Johnson set up field hospitals to support relief efforts.

These actions marked the Company's first documented and coordinated disaster relief and response effort, and they set into motion a legacy of disaster relief and philanthropic outreach that continues today on a global scale.

At the time, many considered these actions to be quite visionary for such a young company. For Johnson & Johnson, it was simply the right thing to do.

It is in this spirit of giving that Johnson & Johnson established its tradition of disaster relief and community philanthropy. In 1943, then Chairman General Robert Wood Johnson, son of the founder Robert Wood Johnson, wrote Our Credo, a one-page document outlining the philosophy that guides the Company's responsibilities to customers, employees, communities, and shareholders. The Company's responsibility to the community serves as the foundation for its giving philosophy.

The Ensuing Years...Product Giving and Disaster Relief

In the years following the Company's initial disaster response in 1906, the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies has responded consistently to major natural and man-made disasters around the world. In the immediate aftermath of any major disaster, Johnson & Johnson works through its key international relief partners and local affiliates to assess and rapidly respond – in many cases within hours – to critical health needs with an array of consumer, pharmaceutical, and medical products. Through partners such as MAP (Medical Assistance Programs) International, Johnson & Johnson routinely deploys disaster relief modules in key global “hot spots” prone to earthquakes, hurricanes, and other catastrophes. These modules include wound care, infection prevention, analgesic and orthopaedic products. Additionally, employees at local Johnson & Johnson companies volunteer to help in communities most affected.

Johnson & Johnson also contributes funds to not-for-profits to provide food, water and health care to those affected by social and civil unrest. AmeriCares, Direct Relief International, International Aid, MAP International, and Salvation Mission Warehouse have been partnering with the Company for many years.

Johnson & Johnson is moving toward the future of disaster relief – response through preparation. Beyond pre-placing disaster relief modules, Johnson & Johnson has partnered with charitable and medical organizations to ensure that those who serve people at high-risk are better prepared for disasters, resulting in fewer injuries and deaths.